

# Learning Is at a Low Ebb in Democratic Germany

## The Universities Are Full to Overflowing, but Only Poverty, Confronts Professional Men

By William C. Dreher

From The Tribune's European Bureau  
BERLIN, August 15

THE future of Germany as an intellectual force in the world is now endangered to a degree that few persons outside of Germany realize. In Germany itself that danger is appreciated indeed, and the newspapers are printing columns of alarm matter on the subject, but even in Germany only a small part of the people appear to understand the situation. Young men and women crowd the universities and technical institutions as never before, pressing forward to intellectual callings at a time when the entire economic basis for such careers is visibly giving way.

Yet the students come in hordes. Last winter there were 82,000 at all the German universities, including about 8,000 women. At the technical institutions there are about 20,000, and in other institutions of university rank about 10,000. There is thus an army of about 112,000 students. The number of women students has more than doubled in five years and almost quadrupled in ten. In 1910 women accounted for 4 per cent of the student body; now they are almost 11 per cent.

### Women Joining Ranks

There are now 20,536 students in the Berlin University, the Technische Hochschule and other higher institutions here, comparing with only 14,351 in 1911-12. The increase of students studying for the various professions is interesting. At all the universities the medical students are 19,534, against 18,048 in 1914; in philosophy, philology and history there are 17,883, against 14,436; in political science and agriculture, 11,035; in law, 15,525; against 9,842. Dentistry shows a unique increase—from 976 to 3,387. Only theology is failing to hold its own, inasmuch as the clerical calling presents fewer attractions than ever. The total of Protestant students of theology was 3,436, or 938 less than in 1914.

and the Catholics 1,666, with a reduction of 392.

Statistics showing how women are pressing into the various professions are especially striking. Not less than 2,192 of them are studying medicine, against only 944 five years ago; 1,200 are taking mathematics and the natural sciences, against 691; 1,150 law and political science, against 185; 182 dentistry, against 65; 130 pharmacy, against 16. It is a noteworthy fact that women are already turning away from the profession of teaching, evidently aware of the overcrowding in that profession. During the ten years ended with 1918 their number ran up from 600 to about 4,000, but during the past two years there has been no further increase.

The large gain in the number of students at the technical colleges has already been mentioned, but the figures quoted do not give an adequate idea of the situation. Besides the technical institutes of high rank, which are state institutions, there are many private schools that undertake to prepare young men for special technical work. They take every applicant and are crowded to capacity. Not a few efficient artisans save up their pennies to pay for courses in these schools, under the impression that the skilled workmen are usually better paid than medium grade technical officials. It appears evident, therefore, especially in view of the uncertain outlook for economic Germany, that the manufacturing companies of the country will within a few years be flooded with applications for employment from young men far beyond their requirements, and many of them will have to look for positions abroad.

### Increase of Physicians

Medicine and law will apparently be the chief battle ground of Germany's intellectual proletariat—medicine in particular. A leading medical weekly recently said that the number of physicians in Germany at the last enumeration was 31,602;

that it is now about 40,000 and will very soon be 50,000. Before the war, adds this paper, there was one physician to 2,000 population; now one to about 1,500; and the time will soon come when there will be one for every 1,000; and then people will begin to ask "What can we do to help the physicians?"

Conditions are developing along precisely similar lines in law. The ranks of the law students have been swollen to ominous proportions through the practical dissolution of the army, which closed the military career to the sons of the nobility. These and many others are pressing for admission into the law.

All this rush of hopeful young spirits into intellectual callings at a moment when Germany is sinking deeper and deeper into poverty is a thing that threatens tragic results. Most of these students are struggling through poverty into what threatens to become still sharper poverty. In a recent interview a high official of the Prussian Ministry of Education said that only 30 per cent of the students have more than 300 marks a month for their support, and 6 per cent of them have less than 100 marks. They are compelled to work to carry themselves through the universities. Many of them tutor schoolboys at 1 to 3 marks an hour, and malnutrition has reached a frightful stage among the students. One writer says that over 5,000 of the Berlin students are able to afford a warm dinner only once a week. The English Quakers recently opened an eating house for them and give a warm dinner to about 1,000 at a nominal price. Many students are working in their spare hours to earn money. Some are lamplighters, some work nights at repairing streetcar tracks, some are firemen, some are waiters in hotels and restaurants and some drive automobiles.

### A Constant Struggle

It is under such conditions that the future generation of German scholars is being trained. It is a daily ordeal of grinding poverty—a struggle with hunger and cold. When the student finishes his studies and is finally rewarded with the doctor's degree the hard times deprive him of one of the chief glories that the German student has ever looked forward to as symbolizing his laurel crown of success—the publication of his doctor's dissertation.

This has become far too expensive a pleasure, and the Minister of Education has recently issued a decree relieving the young doctors of that expense. "It would now cost a small fortune," writes a professor, "to get a dissertation printed; and thus the doctor's degree would become more and more the privilege of the rich." Henceforth the young doctors are only to have several typewritten

and rise gradually to 6,800—with a rent allowance of 1,000 to 2,000 marks. The "extraordinary" professors start at 2,600 and rise to 4,800 marks. Besides these sums the professors get a certain percentage of their lecture fees. Altogether the sure income of an ordinary professor ranges between 6,700 and 9,100 marks; that of the extraordinary from 5,700 to 7,500 marks. Hence many of these learned men do

The suggestion has been seriously put forth that writing machine corps be organized among the students, whose task should be to strike off copies of new unpublished books by the professors for supplying the various university libraries.

At a meeting of the German Book Publishers' Association, held at Leipzig May 2, the distress of the book trade formed the burden of discussion. The price of paper, it was said, had risen fifteen-fold and more from 1914 to 1919. A pound of paper containing no wood pulp cost 20 pfennigs before the war; it now costs 94 marks. Setting and printing increased eightfold, illustrations seven to ten fold. It was added that prices were still soaring; and it was almost impossible for a publisher to determine what the retail price of a book ought to be. It was further declared that present costs of printing would in a short time cause the suspension of all scientific publications, because these can look for only small sales that would not cover the costs of manufacture.

### "Kultur Catastrophe"

The book publishers then raised the following poignant cry of distress: "It is therefore the duty of every true German to draw public attention to the fact that, with the breakdown of the German book trade, we are hurrying toward the kultur catastrophe of our people."

In line with this the Deutsche Bücherei (a sort of national library) at Leipzig has recently reported that no fewer than 140 periodicals have suspended publication since the war began, thirty-two of them this year. It mentioned the suspension of the Zeitschrift für Philosophie and Philosophical Criticism, after having reached its 165th volume; and the Zeitschrift für Private and

## Even in the Biggest Schools Scrub-women Receive Higher Wages Than the Teachers

Public Law died at the age of forty-two.

At the end of June the Society of German Publishers issued its annual report, in which it pronounced the last year "the blackest and most dismal in its history." After referring to the vast increase of expenses in the publishing business, the report says that it is precisely the most valuable books, from the cultural standpoint, that are most seriously threatened, since they appeal to only a small public and can be brought out only in limited editions. Such books, it says, have either ceased to be published, or can be brought out only at heavy loss.

The report further says that after Germany's frontiers were opened last year there was an enormous rush of foreign buyers of German books, taking advantage of the depreciation of the mark to get them at very low prices. Owing to the same cause vast quantities of German timber and wood pulp were sent abroad; and this is partly why most German paper mills are idle.

This report says that printers' wages have risen 700 per cent and binding 550 per cent, with additional charges for certain materials. Through these causes, including the high price of paper and the impossibility of obtaining it at all, the great publishing firms, says the report, were forced to restrict their activity more and more. The National Printing Office at Berlin raised its prices 380 per cent last year, and more recently the advance has been carried to 770 per cent over peace prices.

### Libraries Co-operate

The high cost of foreign periodicals at the existing rates of exchange is another serious blow for Germany's scholarship. The cost of such publications ranges from twenty to thirty fold the pre-war prices. The Prussian State Library, as the old Royal Library is now called, took 3,000 foreign periodicals for its reading room before the war; but it has been compelled to cut down its list to 250. Owing to this situation the German libraries have organized a sort of cooperative society for subscribing for foreign periodicals. The plan is to adopt a list of the most important of such publications and assign a part of it to each library, thus insuring that every good foreign periodical shall be taken by at least one library. Then the magazines will be sent around to the other libraries as called for, in exchange for similar courtesy.

The various German academies of science, universities, technical colleges and research institutes have also recently organized the so-called Notgemeinschaft (Emergency

League) of German science, which has just memorialized the national government in regard to the precarious situation of many agencies of research and general culture. The sum of 20,000,000 marks is asked for immediately to rescue research institutes from threatened ruin. It is argued that there is also urgent need for more money for libraries and laboratories, owing to the great advance in prices. It is pointed out that in most cases the entire sum appropriated for such institutions is absorbed by heat and light and the cleaning of rooms.

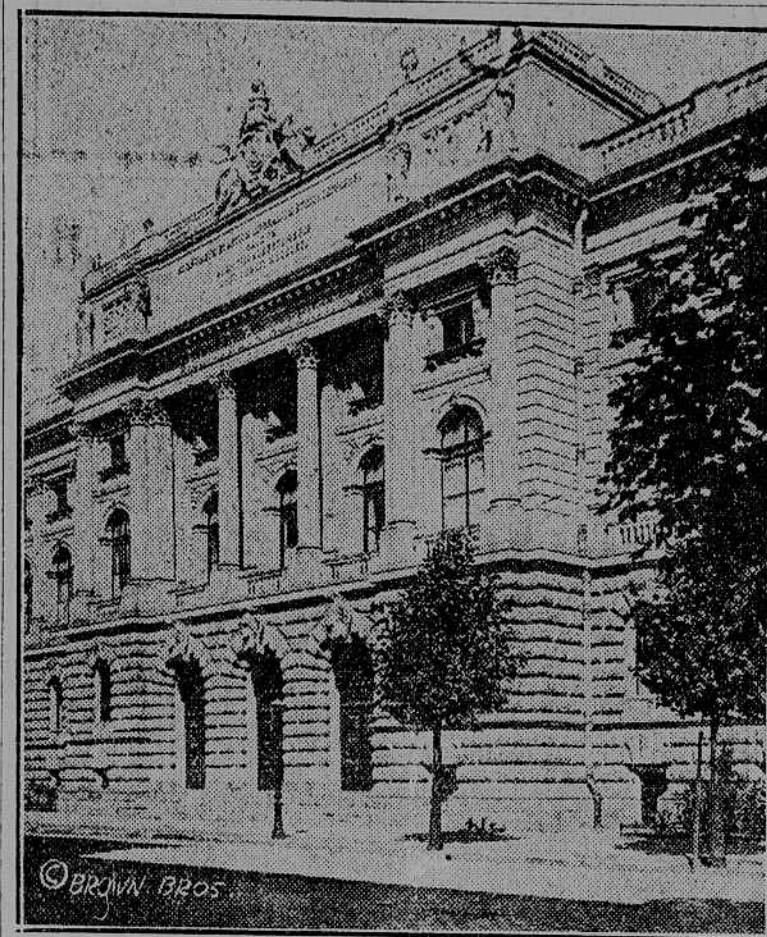
### Music and the Stage

"Fundamentally important institutes," says the league, "like those for experimental therapeutics at Berlin and Frankfurt, those for cancer research at Berlin, Frankfurt and Heidelberg, can make but slow progress in investigating the theory of immunity and the origin of cancer. Important sections like that of bacteriology at the Berlin Pharmacological Institute had to be abolished. Hygienic scientists were unable to continue their investigations of tuberculosis, combating epidemics, and the best kinds of dwellings. The physiologists have no possibility whatever of carrying forward to completion precisely their important experiments in nutrition. Owing to the enormous prices of animals for purposes of experimentation the great German research institutes must confine themselves to a few minor investigations with frogs and dogs, and to collecting statistical material."

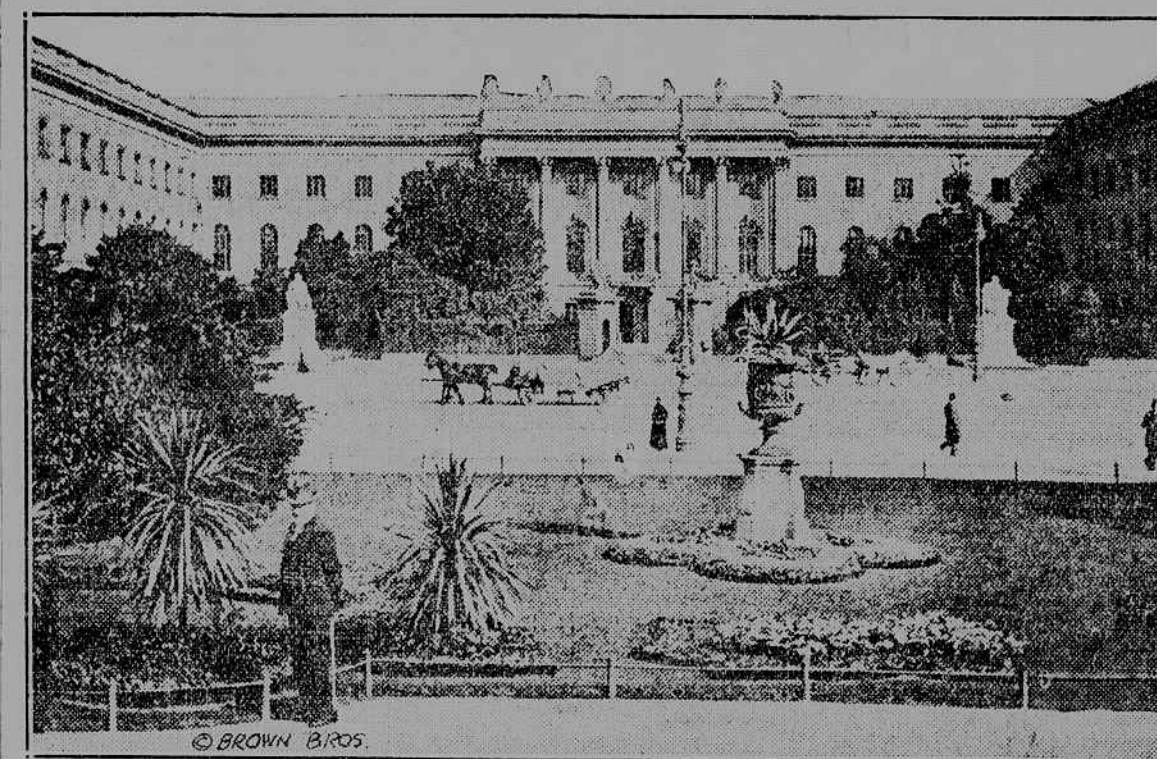
German music and the stage are also caught in the ice-pressure of hard times. The Philharmonic Chorus, the principal choral society of Berlin, has just voted to disband, after an existence of thirty-eight years, owing to the great expense of giving concerts. A concert that would previously have cost 2,000 or 3,000 marks rose last year to 5,000 marks, but would now cost 16,000 marks; while a concert on a grander scale would cost 40,000 marks. Nikisch has found it necessary to raise the price for his ten philharmonic concerts for the next season from 85 to 240 marks. Other musical organizations are threatened with extinction. It is even reported that the famous Gewandhaus Orchestra at Leipzig, long led by Mendelssohn, is in serious danger of dissolution.

Important theaters, too, are in jeopardy. At Stuttgart the State Theater got along before the war with a subsidy of 60,000 marks; but it had to be raised during the war to 110,000 and after the revolution to 240,000 marks; but the theater now has a deficit of 3,000,000 marks. And this is one of the most famous theaters in Germany. At Coburg the city council has voted to assume 60 per cent of the deficit of the former Court Theater, but declared itself unable to continue bearing such a burden. Many theaters of less importance than these, which had been dependent upon municipal subsidies, will have to close their doors permanently owing to the increase of expenses.

From all that has been said here it is evident that Germany's intellectual and artistic life is in an extremely grave position. The economic machinery of the country was so severely strained by the war that the people are now forced to grapple with the mere bread and butter problem of life; and Germany's whole intellectual position in the world, held with justifiable pride for centuries, is in danger of being undermined and permanently destroyed.



The University of Leipzig



The University of Berlin

copies of their dissertations made for the university library.

German students are striving to carry forward the tradition of scholarship under these hard conditions. And what is to be their material reward? As matters are now going they are to enter upon hopeless competition with porters and scrubbing women. At Berlin there is an institution for scientific research whose fame has gone even into foreign countries. Its annual budget contains these two entries:

Director, Professor X, salary, 6,000 marks.

Scrubbing woman, Anna Y, salary, 7,200 marks.

### Teachers Underpaid

The case is typical of conditions throughout the learned professions of Germany, especially where men draw salaries from the government. The pay of government employees had become so notoriously inadequate that a general advance was provided for by a law recently passed; but even this law left fully half of the clerks and most of the school-teachers in classes below "scrubbing woman, Anna Y."

Some remarkable statistics have recently been published, showing the economic plight of the Privat-Dozenten at the universities. These men are the private lecturers, from whose ranks the future professors are selected. While they are on the waiting lists they are without salary and live—or starve—on the fees paid by their hearers. The statistics in question, gathered at twelve universities, show that half of these lecturers gather less than 500 marks a year from their fees, and 40 per cent of them have less than 5,000 marks private income, before paying taxes.

Yet three-fourths of them are married and about forty-one years old. They have spent more than a score of their years in preparing for an appointment which the majority of them will never receive at all; and their only reward will be the satisfaction that comes from devotion to scholarly pursuits. But even a professorship is no Golconda. The "ordinary" professors begin with a salary of 4,200 marks

not reach the pecuniary dignity of "Anna Y."

The case is even worse with the teachers in the *Gymnasien*, the fitting schools for the universities are called. They begin with 2,700 marks and after twenty-one years of the daily wear and drudgery of the schoolroom they overtake "Anna Y."

"The moral," says a writer in the Frankfurter Zeitung, in reporting the foregoing facts, "is this: Let your boy study blacksmithing—not philology." The same paper urgently demands that something be done to remedy the conditions here described. "Quick rescue is necessary," it writes, "or the consequences to German scholarship will be incalculable."

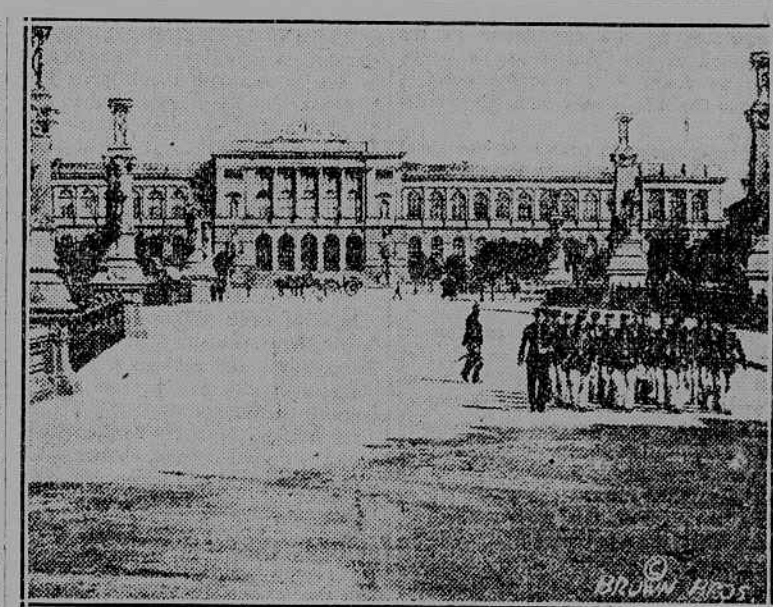
It can well be imagined, from what has been said, that there is much distress among Germany's intelligentsia. One can, in fact, hear pathetic stories as to what these men and their families are suffering. Yet few such stories become known; the sufferers bear hunger and cold in silence like that Spartan boy bitten by a fox concealed under his cloak.

### Distress in Book Trade

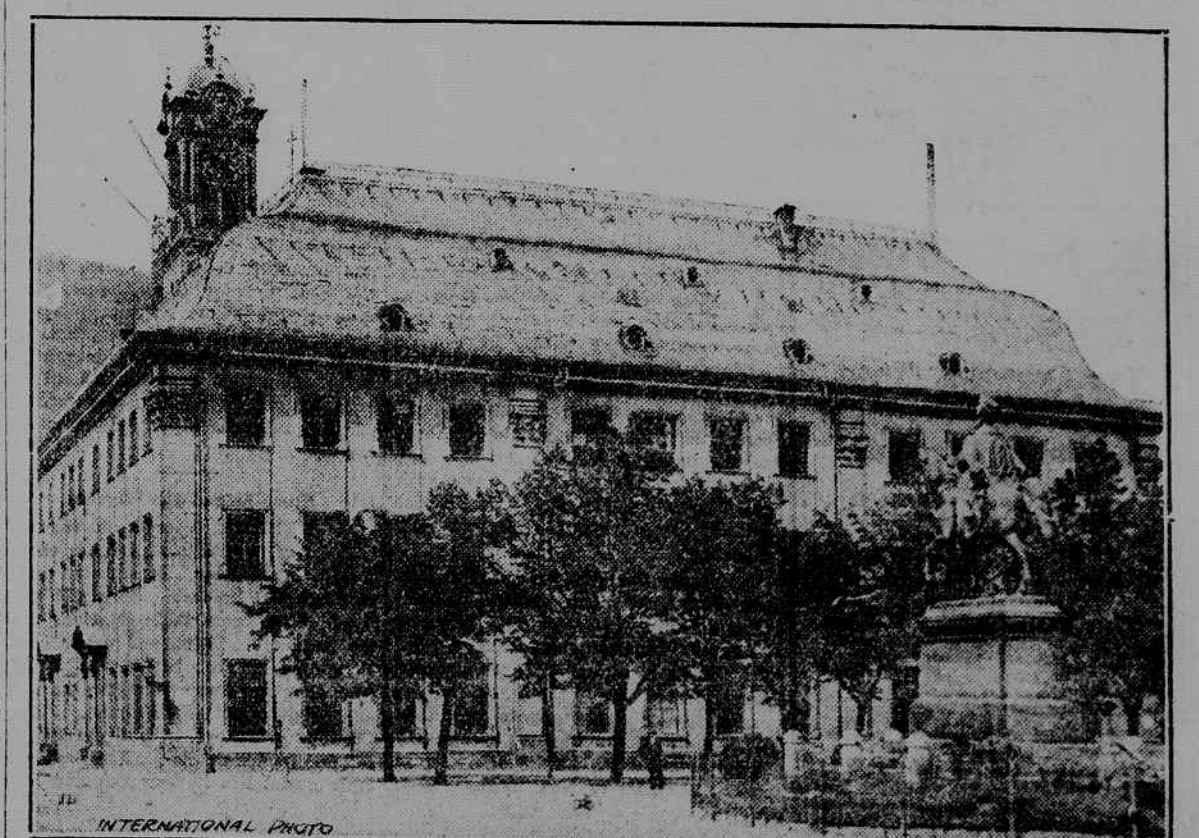
But German scholars and literary men are hard hit in other ways besides low pay.

Authorship has ever been a special ambition of every *herr* professor; but even that pleasure has been wrested from him by the depreciation of the currency and the consequent prodigious increase in the cost of printing books. Owing to this cause the Berlin Academy of Sciences recently suspended its publications, and Professor Harnack, the famous church historian, has just announced that he must discontinue the further publication of his books and will have to content himself with placing his manuscripts in the state library for the use of scholars. "And thus," says a newspaper writer in this connection, "German scholarship has been thrown back technically into the period before Gutenberg."

And here is another fact that is singular commentary upon conditions in what was hitherto the greatest bookmaking nation in the world:



The University of Strassbourg



The University of Heidelberg

## American Ways and Manners

CAN there be any more delightful holiday than visiting a foreign land where one understands the language almost completely? asks H. W. Nevins, writing in The Manchester Guardian. An Englishman in the United States can enjoy that strange pleasure to the full. For a time a few words may escape him.

For a week or two he is almost sure to get the accent wrong in such words as "ordinarily" or "necessarily." He will get the pronunciation wrong in "tomato" and "vase" and a few other common words. He will continue to say "got" instead of "gotten," and he will spell "check" as "cheque," or talk of engaging a room instead of making a reservation, or ask for a season ticket instead of commuting.

But these little errors are soon corrected, and even in his broken American how much more easily the Englishman moves than in his broken English or German or Swahili! How much more readily he sympathizes with peculiarities and characteristics among the Americans than among other foreigners, such as the Chinese or Hindus! As in Ireland, he is a foreigner, but he has less difficulty of comprehension.

### Had Expected Rudeness

From the very first the Englishman is overwhelmed with surprise, chiefly delightful. He had expected to be received with rudeness or at the best with indifference. He had supposed the American people as a whole to be rough and ill-mannered. Perhaps their loud and high pitched voices had given him the idea. But the loud or high pitched voice is produced, I think, mainly by the noise of the cities, or by the isolation of the houses in the suburbs and country (so that one has to shout to be heard from door to door), or by the habit of talking all at one time, so that only the loudest voice can assert itself.

It has no connection whatever with aggressiveness, impoliteness or want of consideration. Except perhaps in India, I have never known such consideration, such sensitiveness to the feelings of others, such solicitude to please as in these States.

An Englishman appears among the people as a stranger speaking their language with a markedly foreign accent. We know how "the beastly foreigner" is treated in our country, and I expected even worse.

from the porter to the policeman and the educated man or woman in the street, seemed to have been waiting all of their lives just for this opportunity of doing me a service and giving all their aid. If I inquire the way every one within hearing stops dead still to tell me, just as all the traffic in Fifth Avenue stops as though frozen when the red light and then the green appear on the new signal boxes in the middle of the street.

### Anything to Please

Men and women go far out of their way to show me the shortest route. (They call it "route," but what does that matter? So do our soldiers.) If I do not understand some custom they sit down on a bench and explain until the meaneast understanding can be in no doubt. When a total stranger like myself is introduced, men and women come forward with such a smile and such a cry of "Very pleased indeed to meet you!" that it is almost impossible to realize they would say the same to your bitterest enemy. Insincere? Not in the least. It is but politeness and the solicitude to please. How charming, after the English and Scottish manner of greeting every stranger as an enemy or a bore!

How this widespread politeness has grown up and been diffused I cannot say. It is the more remarkable because the children are so commonly what is called ill-bred. They persist and interrupt and whine. They whine like sick kittens. They seem never to have "Hush!" or "Don't!" said to them, and never to be told that "little people are meant to be seen and not heard." I suppose there is not on earth a more irritating human being than the ordinary whining American child between five and ten.

"If only I had the wringing of your neck!" the unaccustomed Englishman is inclined to remark.

And yet, out of these unendurable little terrors grow the sweetest-tempered and most courteous men and women I have known. Is there, then, something wrong in the British training? Must we abandon "Hush!" and "Don't"? Must we cease to speak roughly to the little child and beat him when he whines? God forbid! There must be other causes for the charm of American manners.

### Possibly the Schools

Puritanism as a religion is dead, but perhaps there lingers still a tradition of the Puritan sweetness of manner and quiet grace in behavior—such sweetness and quietude as grave Quakers use. Generation after generation of old Americans

descendants love to call them now) once lived as in God's sight—lived each day as it were their last, or at least professed to live in that solemn manner.

Perhaps a fellow feeling of equality in the presence of Eternal Truth has passed into the very blood of the race. Or if that explanation seems too far-sought, there are the public schools to teach equality. For the public school in America is not the richly endowed private school for the children of the plutocracy as in England, but is really a public school open to every class, to every degree of wealth or poverty.

I am told the standard of education is not so high as in our so-called public schools. As far as the teaching of knowledge goes, I do not understand how it could be lower, but granting that knowledge is but a very small part of education, still one may say that the American public schools beat ours easily in the diffusion of manners.

Who can overestimate the advantage of a country where all the young stand on a footing of equality and where opportunity for knowledge and a common education is open to all, irrespective of the parents' wealth? Here one says "Sir" to every one or no one. On the trains there is only one class, and the workman is as comfortable as the capitalist (the great expresses take Pullman cars and sleeping cars, it is true, but there are no first, second and third class compartments). I suppose equality and the freedom from fear of riches or station are the very foundations of good manners. For a man conscious of social inferiority will be either servile or rude.

### Work and No Worry

Work is here conducted with a deal of unnecessary noise and an assumption of "hustle," but the inner spirit of it is easy going and leisurely, as befits the heat of summer and the heated rooms of winter. People "blow in" at the offices about 9 or 9:30. They blow out to lunch for an hour or so at 12, and Broadway "downtown" or Fifth Avenue at Twenty-third Street becomes a moving swarm of youths and maidens, beaming, well dressed, well fed, much at their ease. About five all blow away to their homes by bus, trolley, subway or elevated rail. No doubt a lot of work gets done, but it is absurd to think of Americans as sunk to the chin in business. A cheerful spirit of leisure prevails. Outside Russia I have never seen a people so unpunctual, so indifferent to time. Time to them is entirely, and wisely, a matter of "relativity," and so is